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UNH Celebrates 30th Anniversary Of Women's Studies Program May 2-3, 2008

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April 22, 2008

DURHAM, N.H. - The University of New Hampshire will mark the 30th anniversary of its Women's Studies Program - one of the first in the nation - with a two-day celebration May 2-3, 2008.

The celebration, which includes panels, discussions, honors, memorials and festivities, begins at noon, Friday, May 2, 2008, in the Huddleston Hall Ballroom. Events on Saturday, May 3, 2008, resume at 8 a.m. in the Memorial Union Building, Granite State Room. All events are free and open to the public.

The keynote address, "Acting Together on the World Stage: Reflections on a Feminist Education and Peacebuilding," will be delivered at 8 p.m. Friday, May 2, 2008, by Cynthia Cohen, executive director of the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence at Brandeis University. Cohen holds a Ph.D. in education from UNH and coordinated the UNH President's Commission on the Status of Women from 1990 to 1992.

In the 1970s when women's studies programs began to flourish in the United States, the statement that one's personal experience was political became a rallying cry. The UNH Women's Studies Program, launched in 1977 as an undergraduate minor, was one of the first nationally.

"It's very nice to know that UNH was on the cutting edge," says Marla Brettschneider, a political science professor and the women's studies coordinator.

According to a 2007 National Women's Studies Association survey, there are now about 650 women's and gender study programs in higher education in the United States, with more than 89,000 students enrolled in women's studies courses nationally.

The women's studies major was approved at UNH in 1991. The program's faculty now includes four full-time joint appointments. The participating faculty numbers about 20 in fields ranging from art and art history; communication; economics; English; history; languages, literatures, and cultures; nursing; political science; and sociology.

The program continues to innovate just as it did in its early years with the Outreach Nursing Home Project, courses such as Women in Management and the Women's Studies Math Anxiety Committee. Most recently, queer studies, which was an academic emphasis housed in women's studies, was approved as a minor. Once again, this is an area of cutting-edge research.

"I'm really proud both of where we came from and of where we are now; of what the program

offers to colleagues and to the students," Brettschneider says. "We have a great faculty doing really interesting gender-related research. They're still setting a growth course."

The anniversary celebration is sponsored by the President's Office, the Provost's Office, the Office of the Vice President for Student and Academic Affairs, the Offices of Diversity Initiatives and President's Commissions, the President's Commission on GLBT Issues, the President's Commission on the Status of People of Color, the President's Commission on the Status of Women, the College of Liberal Arts, the Alumni Association, the Queer Studies Program, the Center for the Humanities, the Center for New England Culture, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, Kidder Fund Committee and Health Services.

For more information, visit www.unh.edu/womens-studies/30th-anniversary.

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